



James C. Christensen (1942-2017)

*The Ten Lepers, 2002*

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We, the people of Boonah Catholic parish,  
acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our parish is located  
and where we conduct our mission and ministry.

We pay our respects to ancestors and elders, past and present.

As a local community of faith within the Church of Brisbane,  
we are committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples'  
unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas  
and their rich contribution to society.

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*Warm greetings to the members of the Boonah Catholic community and beyond on this 28<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.*

## **1. Reflections on the Sunday Word.**

**This reflection is written by Br. Julian McDonald CFC who lives in Sydney.**

If this Sunday's gospel-reading has done nothing else for me, it has made me reflect, yet again, on a question with which I have often wrestled: *Where did Jesus get the ability to cure people and breathe new life into them?* Moreover, the question that Jesus asks of the Samaritan who returns to thank him, makes me wonder if he expected a word of appreciation from those he helped. There seems to be a bit of an edge of personal hurt when he asks aloud to anyone within earshot: "Were not all ten made whole? Where are the other nine? Why is this foreigner the only one who came back to give thanks to God?" (Luke 17: 17-18).

I cannot find anywhere else in the Gospels where Jesus expects to be thanked for the cures and healings he worked. What's more, given that he was fully human, he did not have at his disposal some store of divine power on which he could call whenever he encountered people who were sick or physically and mentally disabled. I am convinced that the power he had over illness, disability and evil spirits came from the depth of his prayerfulness and his extraordinary faith in God. I can find nothing else in the stories of Jesus' miracles to suggest that Jesus ever went looking for accolades or expressions of gratitude either for himself or for God.



So, what is behind his lament that the Samaritan was the only one who returned to thank God? I suspect it has something to do with the ongoing frustration that Jesus had with the religious authorities who repeatedly accused him of flouting the Law and the Prophets. In response to

their allegations of his breaking the Law, Jesus had questioned their inability to accept that the spirit of the Law mattered more than adherence to the letter of the Law. He was critical of their inflexibility when it came to interpreting the law and their fundamentalism when it came to applying the Law. The very fact that he had stopped to listen to the group of lepers when they called out to him was a breach of the Law in the eyes of the religious leaders. The lepers themselves had dared to cross the line of the isolation imposed on them, and Jesus had broken the law by engaging with them, even though it was from a distance.

The Book of Leviticus clearly stated the restrictions imposed of people suffering from leprosy: "The person who bears the sore of leprosy shall keep his garments rent and his head bare, and shall muffle his beard; he shall cry out: 'Unclean, unclean!' As long as the sore is upon him, he shall declare himself unclean, since he is in fact unclean. He shall dwell apart, making his abode outside the camp." (Leviticus 13, 45-46).



In a world in which medicine was not a well-developed science, the measure of quarantining lepers as described in the above excerpt from Leviticus appears to be a wise public-health measure taken to prevent contagion.

In time, however, a view developed in Jewish society that serious illness was visited on people as a divine punishment for personal sin. Lepers came to be regarded as sinners themselves or as being punished for the sin of a family member or ancestor. Eventually, anyone suffering from any single one of a number of skin diseases was categorised as a leper and, as a result, was segregated from the community and labelled as an untouchable. What began as quarantining developed into unjustified punishment for sin. Anyone who recovered from a skin disease could be readmitted to the community only after his or her recovery was authenticated and certified by a priest.

By directing the ten untouchables to present themselves to a priest, Jesus was making sure that they were adhering to the only process that would free them from stigma and readmit them to the community from which they had been expelled. However, the twist in the tale was that these ten lepers clung to life on the edge of a village that bordered both Galilee and Samaria. Serious illness acts as a leveller in a group in which every member has become an untouchable. The Samaritan leper was effectively no different from his companions.

However, there was deep and long-lived enmity and bitterness between Jews and Samaritans. They refused to engage with one another. So, while ten untouchables were cured, only nine would be acceptable in Galilean society. Even if a Jewish priest were to grudgingly certify the Samaritan's cure, the latter would still be regarded as ritually unclean and expelled from a Galilean village community. So, he probably saw no point in presenting himself to a Jewish priest and, instead, went back to the only Jew who he believed would accept him.

The welcome which Jesus gave him was: “Your faith has made you well.” Might Jesus have been referring to a wellness of mind and heart, a cure from intractable racial division? After all, here was a Samaritan approaching a Jewish rabbi to express his gratitude. Rather than commenting on the thoughtlessness or ingratitude of the nine who did not return to him, Jesus was expressing his frustration with a society that would readmit them and scorn and reject one whose ethnic origins were different.

During his public ministry, Jesus repeatedly reminded the religious leaders, who watched him so intently in the hope of catching him breaking the Law, that compassion trumped inflexible legalism. In healing people and restoring them to community, Jesus reminded them that they, in their turn, had a responsibility to live differently, to bring life and love, compassion and understanding to people around them.

We, too, have all been recipients of God’s gracious love. Surely, that compels us to give our time, attention and energy to chipping away at whatever creates divisions among us, be it ethnic difference, gender, sexual orientation, academic qualifications or religious affiliation. What in our minds and attitudes are the boundary lines which have become uncrossable? Whom do we regard as untouchable or unapproachable because of our deep-seated fear, our ingrained prejudice or blind ignorance?

Without further comment, Jesus cleverly asked: “Were not all ten made whole? Where are the other nine?” Might he not have been suggesting that they were in their new-found comfort zone on the side of a border where prejudice and bigotry were rife? Only one had been cured of mind, heart and attitude as well as of leprosy. That Samaritan claimed his true freedom and turned away from bitterness and prejudice. Is there not in the Samaritan’s action a similar challenge for us?

A **second reflection** is by Peggy Thompson who is a professor of History and Political Science at Syracuse University’s (New York) Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.

Click [here](#) to watch and listen to her homily.



#### **HOW GRATITUDE CHANGES YOU AND YOUR BRAIN (Joshua Brown, Joel Wong: 6 June, 2017)**

Recent evidence suggests that a promising approach is to complement psychological counselling with additional activities that are not too taxing for clients but yield high results. In our own research, we have zeroed in on one such activity: *the practice of gratitude*. Indeed, many studies over the past decade have found that people who consciously count their blessings tend to be happier and less depressed.



The problem is that most research studies on gratitude have been conducted with well-functioning people. *Is gratitude beneficial for people who struggle with mental health concerns? And, if so, how?*

We set out to address these questions in a recent research study involving nearly 300 adults, mostly college students who were seeking mental health counselling at a university. We recruited these

participants just before they began their first session of counselling, and, on average, they reported clinically low levels of mental health at the time. The majority of people seeking counselling services at Berkeley University in general struggled with issues related to depression and anxiety.

Four insights from our research suggesting what might be behind gratitude's psychological benefits.

1. *Gratitude unshackles us from toxic emotions*
2. *Gratitude helps even if you don't share it*
3. *Gratitude's benefits take time*
4. *Gratitude has lasting effects on the brain*

[CLICK HERE](#) for the entire article



## 2. *Boonah Parish happenings . . .*

from commands to invitations,  
from laws to ideals,  
from threats to persuasion,  
from coercion to conscience,  
from monologue to conversation,  
from ruling to serving,  
from withdrawn to integrated,  
from vertical and top-down to horizontal,  
from exclusion to inclusion,  
from hostility to friendship,  
from static to changing,  
from passive acceptance to active engagement,  
from prescriptive to principled,  
from defined to open-ended,  
from behaviour-modification to conversion of heart,  
from the dictates of law to the dictates of conscience,  
from external conformity to the joyful pursuit of holiness.

When these elements are taken in the aggregate, they indicate a model of spirituality. This, they say, is what good Catholics should look like and this is how they should behave. That means the elements indicate what the Church should look like and how it should behave. This is a significant model-shift. This is a teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

Our **Sunday eucharist** schedule is:



**Saturday**

5.00pm **Boonah church**

**Sunday**

7.30am **1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: Harrisville church**

**2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Peak Crossing church**

9.30am **Boonah church**

*Desert Eucharist, Linda Syddick Napaltjarri (b. 1937)*

(5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month: 6pm Sat night Harrisville church & 9.30am Sun morning Boonah church. **We have a 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday on 29<sup>th</sup> October**).

Our **weekday Mass** schedule for this week, the 28<sup>th</sup> week in Ordinary Time:

**Tuesday** 11<sup>th</sup> October 5.30pm Boonah church

**Wednesday** 12<sup>th</sup> October 6.00pm **Peak Crossing** church followed by meal at *The Peak Pub*

**Thursday** 13<sup>th</sup> October 8.00am **Boonah** church

**Friday** 14<sup>th</sup> October 8.00am **Boonah** church

**We pray with and for those who are sick in our parish and beyond:** all across the globe infected with COVID-19; all those who are unwell because of the war raging in Ukraine and in other places of the globe; all who are starving; Chris Healy, Paul White, Arthur Devin, Liliana Toohill, Libby Shields, Marko Babic, Max Gardiner, Bernadette Pinchin, Cate Mitten, Bernice Brault, Paula Ebrington, Fletcher Casey, Jill Archer, Louisa, Lynne Nunan, Bea Bedard (USA), Carol Libke, Angela Kearney, Tony Pisani, Lorraine Bakon, Maureen Wilson, Fletcher Casey, Moira Lehmann, Robert Hensen, Wally Velasquez and sick members of parish families and those beyond our parish boundaries.



▪ We extend our sympathy and condolences to Dr. Tony Eviston and his wife, Majella, Tony's sisters, Libby and Jane, and their respective families, on the death of his mother, Betty Eviston. We celebrated her funeral yesterday after Betty had a short stay at the local aged care home. *May she rest in peace.*

▪ **Boonah Parish Safeguarding Officer.** Leigh Muller is the Parish Safeguarding Officer.  
Email: [boonah@bne.catholic.net.au](mailto:boonah@bne.catholic.net.au)

▪ **Celebrating the sacrament of Reconciliation.** The 1<sup>st</sup> Rite for Reconciliation (formerly known as Confession) may be celebrated anytime. Please phone 5463 1057 to make a suitable time. Alternatively see me before Mass (if there is plenty of time) or after Mass (once the majority of people have left the church).

▪ The **Moogerah Passion Play Association** is holding *Christmas by the Lake* on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November. The gates open at 2.30pm and the performance starts at 5.00pm.



At the Boonah Masses last weekend, Chris Young promoted this event and especially invited singers to join a choir.

Choir rehearsals began on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October at 2pm at the **Uniting Church, Boonah**. *All are welcome.*

A call is also being made for actors (non-speaking roles), narrators, welcomers, and people to do both preparation and cleaning-up.

Please put your name on the sheets at the back of the church. Further details and information is on the noticeboard or you can contact Chris on 0422 878 744.

Information and tickets are also on the website: <https://moogerahpassionplay.org.au/>

▪ **Every Sunday** when we gather for the Sunday eucharist, there are baskets (of some kind or another) at the entrances of our churches.

We are invited to bring a gift of **non-perishable food or goods** for people seeking help from our local St. Vincent de Paul.

*The local conference very much appreciates our weekly support.*



*Everybody wants to be somebody; nobody wants to grow.*

Johann W. Goethe

1749-1832

*German poet, playwright, novelist, scientist,  
civil servant and diplomat, theatre director, critic.*

**3. Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI recently reposted this short article from 28 December 1992. It is titled: "Signs of a Good Marriage."**

No amount of preaching shapes a soul as much as does the influence of a good Christian life. If that is true, and it is, then no marriage course is ever as powerful to teach about marriage as is the witness of a good marriage.

I understood this first-hand a few months ago when I attended the 50th wedding anniversary of an uncle and aunt. Theirs has been a good marriage – good harmony, good hospitality, good family, sustained faith.

However, and only they know the full price tag, this did not always come easily. They spent enough years without money and without extras, raising a large family. His first job, clerking in a store, paid him 50 cents a day. She couldn't find any work at all – "women weren't needed in the job market in those days!"

There were as well, as in all families, countless other struggles and, in their case, countless more hours spent by both beyond their own family concerns, working in church and community circles.

Nearly 300 of us, family and friends, gathered to toast and roast them. At the end of the banquet my uncle stood up to thank everyone.

He ended his comments with the words: "When we got married 50 years ago, we didn't have much, but we had an unconscious trust that if we lived by the Ten Commandments and the laws of the church then things would turn out all right . . . and I think they did."

What an understatement! They turned out more than all right.

A good marriage can best be described, I believe, by four images and theirs is the prime analogue of each of these:

- A good marriage is a warm fireplace. The love that two people have for each other generates a warm place. But the warmth it creates does not just warm the two people in love, it warms everyone else who comes near them – their children, their neighbours, their community and everyone who meets them.
- A good marriage is a big table, loaded with lots of food and drink. When two people love each other sacramentally that love becomes a place of hospitality, a table where people come to be fed – figuratively and really. Again, love, in a true marriage, feeds not just the two people who are generating it, but, because it is sacramental, it always contains more than enough surplus to feed everyone who is fortunate enough to meet it.
- A good marriage is a container that holds suffering. An old axiom says: *Everything can be borne if it can be shared!* That's true. Anyone fortunate enough to have a true moral partner in this life can bear a lot of suffering. That is even truer in a good marriage where the spouses, because of their deep moral and emotional affinity, can carry not just their own sufferings but also can help carry the sufferings of many others.
- Finally, to draw upon a deep Christian image, a good marriage is Christ's body, flesh that is "food for the life of world." Christ left his body to feed the world. A good marriage does precisely that, it feeds everything and everybody around it.



Many of us have experienced this in some of the married people we've met. Having them in our lives is a constant source of (moral, psychological, religious and humour) nourishment.

The marriage of my aunt and uncle is exactly described by these images. Their relationship to each other is a fireplace, where many people, including myself, have found warmth. It is a table – all their houses have always had big tables, big loaded refrigerators and big doors that have welcomed and given hospitality and food and drink to everyone who crossed their threshold.

And their relationship has been a container for suffering. Through the years, thanks to their love for each other, they were able to bear with faith, dignity, soft hearts, and ever-deepening charity, all the pain, tragedy and suffering that

came their way. But they were also able to help many other people, to carry their sufferings.

Finally, their relationship has been, and remains, Christ's body, food for the life of the world. Virtually everyone whose path ever crossed theirs has been fed, nourished, given vitamins in their soul by this marriage.

An age that no longer understands sacrament might, I submit, look at a marriage like this one to better see what shapes soul and what constitutes sacrament.

Sometimes the answers we seek are not found in books but in the house across the street. Sometimes too the sacrament we need to feed our souls is found, not just at the communion rail, but in a warm living room and at a loaded table. Joe and Amelia Gartner – *ad multos annos!*

## A PRAYER FOR ALL THOSE CAUGHT UP IN CONFLICT

God of peace,  
Show us how to put away the weapons of war  
and help us destroy the tools of destruction.  
**God of peace, may your kingdom come.**

God of peace,  
Teach us to follow the ways of justice  
and walk with us the paths of truth.  
**God of peace, may your kingdom come.**

God of peace,  
Challenge the weapons of war,  
and banish hatred and division,  
so that all your children may sleep secure.  
**God of peace, may your kingdom come.**

**Amen.**

*Linda Jones/CAFOD*



 Brisbane Catholic Education  
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# STOPline

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*John*

pastor,  
Boonah Catholic community